



City of Falls Church

Office of Communications

Harry E. Wells Building - 300 Park Avenue - Falls Church, VA 22046-3332

Dionne C. Williams
Communications Director
(703) 248-5101
Fax: (703) 248-5146
E-mail: publicinfo@ci.falls-church.va.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, September 9, 2004

CONTACT:
Dionne C. Williams
(703) 248-5101

The City Mourns the Passing of its Longest Sitting City Manager Mr. Harry E. Wells

FALLS CHURCH, VA. – Harry E. Wells, beloved Falls Church City resident and the City's longest appointed City Manager, serving for 19 years, passed away at his home in Falls Church Tuesday morning. Mr. Wells was 87 years old.

Born in Seat Pleasant, Maryland in 1917 but raised in the City of Falls Church, having attended elementary and middle school in the City, Mr. Wells dedicated his life to his family and to serving the needs of the City.

Prior to working for the City, Mr. Wells worked for Western Electric, the Government Printing Office and the Bureau of Internal Revenue before joining the military in 1941. From 1941 to 1946 Mr. Wells served with the United States Army and the Air Force in World War II, retiring as an Air Force intelligence officer.

Having studied civil engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and later taken public administration courses at the University of Virginia extension school, Mr. Wells worked for the City for 15 years. During that time, he served in numerous capacities – as Clerk of City Council, Treasurer, Property Yard Manager, Registrar of Voters, Clerk of Municipal Court, Purchasing Agent, and Assistant City Manager - before being appointed City Manager in 1964.

During Mr. Wells' tenure, the City expanded and grew into the urban village that its residents have come to love. Mr. Wells left the legacy of establishing open space and parks in the City. In 1968, the railroad that previously ran through the City was abandoned and the first segment of the W&OD bike and pedestrian trail was opened in 1974 within the City. He also renovated the Gage House and established the Senior Center there; started a group home for mentally retarded and a special gym at the Thomas Jefferson Elementary School; established the Community Center; and expanded City Hall to add the now East Wing.

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Page 2

Mr. Wells Passes

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After 30 years of service on August 2, 1979, City Council dedicated City Hall to Mr. Wells renaming it the Harry E. Wells Building. Mr. Wells retired from the City on October 15, 1983, but continued to serve the City through his many volunteer efforts.

His wife Kathleen of 57 years precedes Harry E. Wells in death having passed away in 2000. He is survived by his six children, Michael, Patrick, Kathleen Ann, Maggie, Harry Victor and Ruth, 15 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be held at Murphy Funeral Home, 1102 W. Broad St. in the City on Friday, September 10, from 4 – 8 p.m. Words of tribute and remembrance by family and friends will begin at 7 p.m. Funeral services will be held Saturday, September 11 at St. James Catholic Church, located at 905 Park Avenue at 11:00 a.m. A procession held at 2:30 p.m. will take Mr. Wells and his family to the Harry E. Wells Building, City Hall, located at 300 Park Avenue, where his grandchildren will place a wreath. The procession will then proceed to National Memorial Park on West Street and Lee Highway at 3 p.m. where Mr. Wells will be laid to rest.

The family asks that contributions be made in Mr. Harry E. Wells' name to Parents and Associates of Northern Virginia Training Center, 9901 Braddock Road, Fairfax, Virginia 22032 or to Cherry Hill Farm in care of the Friends of Cherry Hill Foundation, (a non-profit group) located at 312 Park Avenue, Falls Church, Virginia 22046.

(Photo of Mr. Wells taken in 1971 is included below.)

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<http://www.ci.falls-church.va.us>





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